

B Preferably, trunnion tube 16 comprises integral mounts 34 for attaching proximal pivot members 30. Trunnion tube 16 also comprises cylinder tower 36. Hydraulic cylinder 38 is pivotally attached at either end to tower 36 and lift frame tube 22 to drive lift frame 20. Distal pivot members 32 are secured to liftgate platform 40 so that, together with proximal pivot members 30, upper and lower arms 26 and 28 form parallelogram linkages 24. The linkages 24 are configured to maintain the orientation of distal pivot members 32 to proximal pivot members 30 as upper arms 26 and lower arms 28 are raised and lowered. Retraction of hydraulic cylinder 38 drives lift frame tube 22, rotating upper arms 26 and lower arms 28 about proximal pivot members 30 to lower liftgate platform 40. Conversely, extension of hydraulic cylinder 38 raises liftgate platform 40.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

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- 1 1. (Twice Amended) A pre-assembled, freestanding liftgate
2 assembly, comprising:
3 a unitary frame, the unitary frame comprising an opposing
4 pair of side plates and an extension plate
5 extending between the side plates;
6 a hydraulically driven lift frame pivotally attached to
7 the side plates; and
8 a liftgate platform rotatably attached to the lift frame
9 and supported at one end only.

1 2. (Twice Amended) The liftgate assembly of claim 1, wherein
2 the opposing pair of side plates are adapted to secure
3 the freestanding liftgate assembly to an underside of a
4 vehicle body.

1 3. (Twice Amended) The liftgate assembly of claim 2, wherein
2 the opposing pair of side plates are bolted to the
3 underside of the vehicle body.

1 4. (Once Amended) The liftgate assembly of claim 1, wherein
2 the side plates in the unitary frame further comprise
3 formed steps.

1 5. (Once Amended) The liftgate assembly of claim 1, further
2 comprising a hydraulic pump mounted on the unitary frame
3 and coupled to the lift frame.

1 6. (Once Amended) The liftgate assembly of claim 1, further
2 comprising impact bumpers attached to the unitary frame.

1 7. (Once Amended) The liftgate assembly of claim 1, further
2 comprising brackets attached to the side plates in the
3 unitary frame for mounting vehicle lights.

1 8. (Once Amended) The liftgate assembly of claim 1, wherein
2 the lift frame further includes a lift frame tube
3 configured to function as an underride guard.

By 1 9. (Twice Amended) The liftgate assembly of claim 1, wherein
2 the liftgate includes at least one upper stacking member
3 and at least one lower stacking member, and wherein a
4 profile of the lower stacking member is configured to
5 nest with a profile of the upper stacking member.

1 10. (Twice Amended) A vehicle body assembly comprising a
2 vehicle body and a liftgate secured to a vehicle body,
3 the liftgate comprising:
4 a unitary frame, the unitary frame comprising an opposing
5 pair of side plates and an extension plate
6 extending between the side plates;
7 an actuator driven lift frame pivotally attached to the
8 side plates; and
9 a liftgate platform rotatably attached to the lift frame
10 and supported at one end only.

1 11. (Twice Amended) The vehicle body assembly of claim 10,
2 wherein the liftgate is secured to the vehicle body by
3 bolts.

1 12. (Twice Amended) The vehicle body assembly of claim 10,
2 wherein the vehicle body assembly is detached from a
3 vehicle chassis.

1 13. (Twice Amended) The vehicle body assembly of claim 10,
2 wherein the vehicle body comprises a truck bed and the
3 unitary frame is mounted substantially below a floor of
4 the truck bed.

1 14. The vehicle body assembly of claim 13, wherein the
2 extension plate is mounted in a plane formed by the truck
3 bed to provide a bridge from the truck bed to the
4 platform when the platform is horizontally extended in
5 the plane of the truck bed.

1 15. (Twice Amended) A liftgate, comprising:

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- 2 (a) a unitary frame having an opposing pair of side
3 plates, a trunnion tube extending between the side
4 plates and an extension plate extending between the
5 side plates, wherein the side plates are adapted to
6 secure to the structure to an underside of a
7 vehicle body;
 - 8 (b) a lift frame having an opposing pair of
9 parallelogram linkages each having upper arms and
10 lower arms and proximal pivot members and distal
11 pivot members and a lift frame tube extending
12 between the lower arms, wherein the proximal pivot
13 members are secured to the trunnion tube;
 - 14 (c) a liftgate platform rotatably attached to the
15 distal pivot members and supported at one end only;
 - 16 (d) a stop mounted on each parallelogram linkage
17 adjacent the distal pivot member and configured to
18 prevent rotation of the liftgate platform away from
19 the upper and lower arms past a generally
20 horizontal orientation parallel with the bed of the
21 vehicle body and configured to allow rotation of
22 the liftgate platform toward the upper and lower
23 arms to a generally vertical position perpendicular

24 with the vehicle body when in a lowered position;
25 and
26 (e) an extendable actuator pivotally secured at one end
27 to the trunnion tube and at the other end to the
28 lift frame tube;
29 wherein, when the liftgate platform is rotated to a
30 horizontal orientation, extension of the actuator
31 raises the liftgate platform from a lowered
32 position to a raised position while maintaining the
33 horizontal orientation, and when the liftgate
34 platform is rotated to a vertical orientation,
35 extension of the actuator raises and inverts the
36 liftgate platform into a stowed position.

Add the following claim to the subject application:

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25. (New) The method of claim 20, further comprising the step
of attaching a motion limit member to the pivot member of
the lift frame to confine a motion of the liftgate
platform between a first orientation and a second
orientation substantially perpendicular to each other.
